

CELEBRATING

50
Years



THE Kingfisher

NOVEMBER 2023

Kitsap Audubon Society – Since 1973

**November 9th Program (6:30-8:00 p.m.)
Both in-person and Zoom**

The Owl and the Woodpecker Revisited By Paul Bannick

Washington's favorite bird photographer and author Paul Bannick returns to Kitsap Audubon for his fifth appearance to share his spectacular photographs of owls and woodpeckers. The program is updated to reflect what he has learned in the 17 years since the release of his book: *The Owl and The Woodpecker, Encounters with North America's Most Iconic Birds*, including several dozen new photos.

Paul Bannick is an award-winning author and wildlife photographer specializing in the natural history of North America with a focus on birds and habitat. Coupling his love of the outdoors with his skill as a photographer, he creates images that foster the intimacy between viewer and subject, inspiring education and conservation.

Paul is both the author and photographer of two best-selling bird books, *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls* (Braided River 2016) and *The Owl and The Woodpecker, Encounters with North America's Most Iconic Birds* (Mountaineers 2008). Both of Paul's books were well received. Washington's State Museum, The Burke, created two traveling exhibits based on his first book, *The Owl and the Woodpecker*. His second book, *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls*, received Gold Medal in the 2017 Independent Publisher Book Awards "Animals/Pets" category.

Paul's photography has won awards from several prestigious photography contests, including those hosted by Audubon Magazine and the International Conservation Photography Awards.

Photo of Acorn Woodpecker by Paul Bannick



To join Zoom Program, Thurs., Nov. 9th, at 6:30 p.m.:

<https://zoom.us/j/91811374785?pwd=Tm12VIBHWGhRYnRQUmg2RIUrMkJpdz09>

Meeting ID: 918 1137 4785 ; Passcode: 935230

To join by telephone: 1 253 215 8782

Meeting ID: 918 1137 4785; Passcode: 935230

Kitsap Audubon meets in the North Kitsap High School Library, 1780 NE Hostmark, Poulsbo, WA, 98370. Doors open at 6:00 p.m. and **the program begins at 6:30 p.m.**

President's Letter - Kevin Eyer

What a wonderful time for birding this past month has been! I've been delighted to have so many blue sky days and see some of the less frequent visitors to my neighborhood. My favorite visitor this fall was a beautiful golden-crowned sparrow. Busy running back and forth between work and home I couldn't help but pause and listen to its song rising above the others before returning to my responsibilities. I hope you have been able to experience some of the glory of nature this fall. It is truly marvelous!

If you are still looking for an opportunity to get outside this November, the annual Kitsap Salmon Tours will be held on the 4th from 10am-2pm. Kitsap Audubon will be tabling the event at Fish Park and we love to have stop-in visitors. Dress for the weather as it can be cold and wet! We will be just over the bridge by the south parking lot.

Last month our chapter leaders met with others for the 2023 Audubon Conference of Washington (ACOW). We passed a resolution supporting *Important Bird Areas*, adopting Lake Vancouver in Southern Washington State as a new IBA. These are Internationally designated locations that have been identified as critically important to birds, and therefore deserve special protection. See a map of our nation's IBA's here: <https://www.audubon.org/important-bird-areas> We also heard from National Audubon about their priorities including habitat conservation, climate action, policy change, and community building.

If you are interested in boosting your skills at shorebird ID, Vancouver Avian Research Centre is offering a virtual workshop on Wednesday nights in November. We'd love to see our members involved. Information can be found at: <https://www.birdvancouver.com/shorebird-identification-workshop/>.

Let's get outside!

Kitsap Audubon attendees at 2023 ACOW (from left): Don Willott, Jeff Brown, Cystal McMahon, Kevin Eyer, Judy Willott, and (lower right) Lynn Willmott.



Sign up for Washington Advocacy Days 2023, December 4 - 8!

Join us for Advocacy Days, a crucial event spanning December 4th to 8th. This annual gathering empowers you to be a strong advocate for conservation, birds, and the environment. It's your opportunity to directly engage with state legislators, championing local chapter issues, Audubon Washington's policy agenda, and the Environmental Priorities Coalition (EPC) priorities.

By signing up, you'll help us schedule virtual meetings with elected officials, ensuring your voice resonates where it matters most. Together, we can create positive change, protect habitats, and promote climate resilience. Advocacy Days is your chance to shape a greener, more sustainable future.

To sign up click here:

[sign up today and make an impact!](#)

or visit

<https://act.audubon.org/a/advocacy2023>

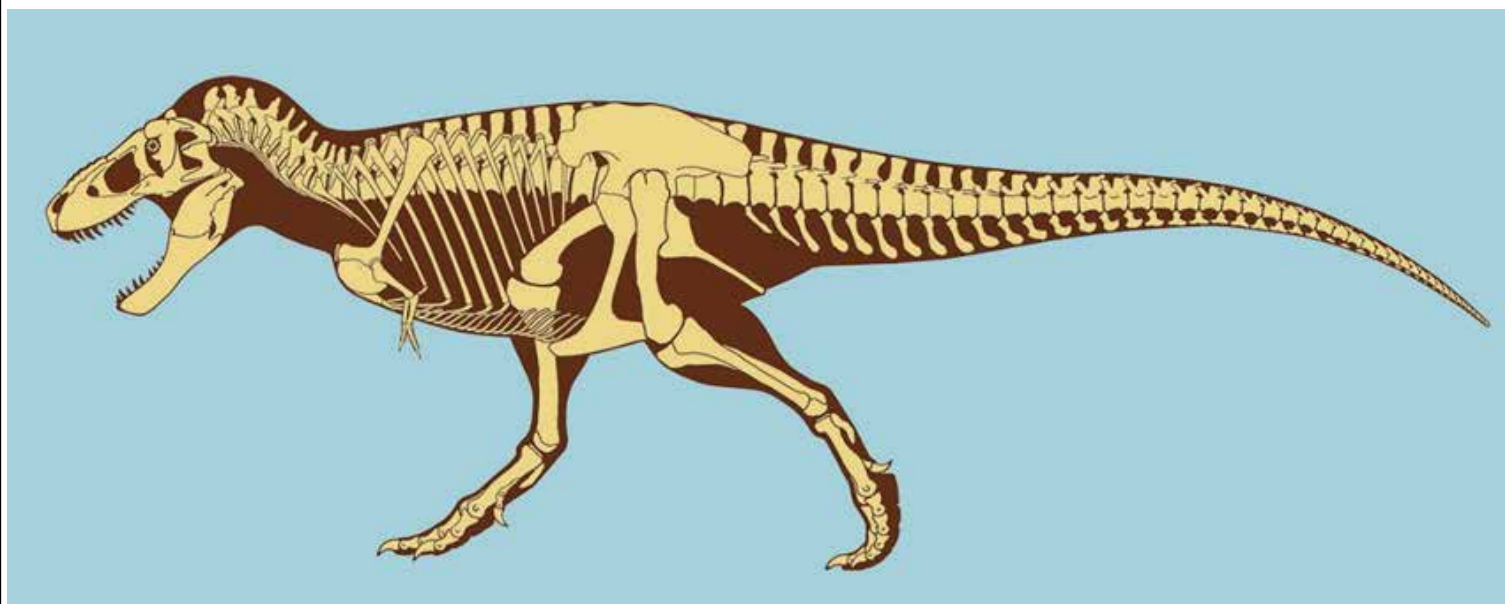


Kids Corner

Which is the real dinosaur?

Scientists now think they all are. Tyrannosaurus rex was a fearsome meat eater that weighed more than an elephant. But its relatives now come to our yards in flocks. Even the tiny Chickadee is related to the biggest, scariest Jurassic dinosaurs that ever lived. Black-capped Chickadees and Ostriches don't have teeth like dinosaurs, but they lay eggs just like dinosaurs did 65 million years ago. And except for the ostrich most birds can fly. Don't you wish you could too?

Today we dine on dinosaurs at holiday time, cook their eggs for breakfast and feed flocks of them in our backyards. We are so glad birds visit our yards and sing such beautiful songs. We're also glad we don't have toothed dinosaurs bigger than elephants in our backyards looking for something to eat.



Field Trips & Festivals - Al Westphal, Field Trip Chair

Liability Waiver Policy:

KAS requires field trip participants to complete a liability waiver. This simple online form can be accessed from our website (<https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/fieldtrips>) or from an emailed link. Once a waiver has been signed, it will be valid for the remainder of the KAS operating year (September – June). Trip leaders will provide detailed instructions upon event registration.

COVID PRECAUTIONS:

We ask the following: (1) Each household must sign up by email in advance with trip leaders; (2) Be prepared to adhere to directives and advice from our public health departments; and (3) Be courteous toward others: If you are not well, especially coughing, sneezing, or wheezing, please stay home.

Birding Festivals and Events: A complete summary of events statewide may be found at the Washington State Audubon site: <http://wa.audubon.org/bird-festivals-0>

Theler Wetlands, Belfair: Saturday, November 18th. Al & Carolyn Westphal, leaders: westphalac@aol.com. Quickly becoming a fall-favorite field trip destination! We will try our luck with the residents and arriving winter birds at this restored wetland at the mouth of the

Union River. This event involves several miles of walking on good trails. Contact trip leader to register and for details.

Trip Report

Billy Frank - Nisqually National Wildlife

Refuge, October 14. A great group of solid birders gathered for this annual fall event, also observing the “Global Big Day” of birding as well as a partial solar eclipse. Strange celestial events may have slowed down the bird activity early in the day, but there was no problem after the sun returned. We tallied 64 species including lots of geese and raptors – plus **discovery** of a previously unreported Red-shouldered Hawk.



Digiscoped photo of Red-tailed Hawk by Al Westphal.

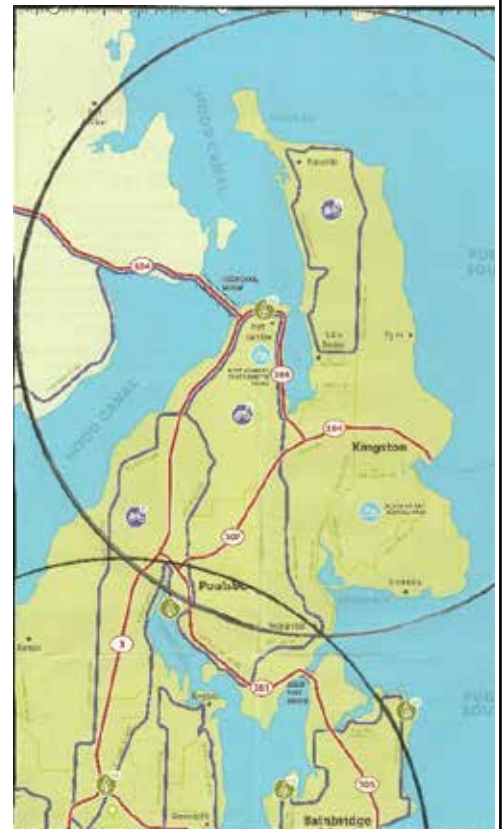
Join Christmas Bird Counts!

The Christmas Bird Count (CBC) was started in 1900 as an alternative to the Christmas “side hunt” in which teams competed to shoot as many birds as possible. That year, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a “Christmas Bird Census” that would count birds rather than hunt them. It is now the nation’s longest running community science survey, with more than 80,000 participants.

Kitsap Audubon will sponsor two CBCs: The traditional Kitsap County CBC on Saturday, December 16th (Compiler: Janine Schutt), and the North Kitsap CBC on Saturday, December 30th (Compiler: Jennifer Standish).

To join a field team, contact the field team leader directly (Check December Kingfisher). If you live within a circle’s boundaries, you can count birds from your own backyard (Contact Janine Schutt at jeschutt@hotmail.com)

For more information about the CBC, please visit our website at <https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/>



Wildlife Sightings - Janine Schutt

The north spit at Foulweather Bluff near Hansville was the place to be this month. At the end of September, a **Pacific golden-plover** made a weeklong stopover there, delighting many birders. It was the *second county record* for the species. The first was found in the same spot in September 2017. In the middle of October, a trio of *Lapland longspurs* likewise spent a few days refueling at Foulweather Bluff for the next portion of the long journey south from their high Arctic breeding grounds. Send your interesting sightings to wildlifesightings@kitsapaudubon.org.

Notable Kitsap Bird Sightings from www.eBird.org:

Sept. 16 at Point No Point (Hansville): 1 Canada jay

Sept. 17 on Bainbridge Island: 1 chipping sparrow

Sept. 23 near Wicks Lake (south of Port Orchard): 9 mountain quails

Sept. 28 at Driftwood Key (near

Hansville): 1 great egret, 1 whimbrel

Sept. 29 Point No Point: 1 common tern

Sept. 29 near Hansville: 1 blue-winged teal

Sept. 30 east of Bainbridge Island: 1

sooty shearwater, 1 Sabine's gull

Oct. 1 at Point No Point: 1 long-tailed jaeger

Oct. 5 at Keyport Saltwater Park: 4 snow geese, 1 surfbird, 1 lesser yellowlegs

Oct. 7 near Kingston: 1 American kestrel

Oct. 8 near Hansville: 1 evening grosbeak

Oct. 8 at Point No Point: 1 eared grebe, 1 northern shrike

Oct. 9 south of Port Orchard: 1 northern pygmy-owl

Oct. 10 near Hansville: 4 greater white-fronted geese

Oct. 12 at Foulweather Bluff: 1 western meadowlark

Oct. 12 at Point No Point: 1 brown pelican

Oct. 12 at Rockaway Beach (Bainbridge Island): 9 Harlequin ducks, 2 black oystercatchers

Oct. 12 at Point No Point: 1 red phalarope

Oct. 12 at Hawley Cove Park (Bainbridge Island): 1 Iceland gull, 1 peregrine falcon, 1 white-throated sparrow

Oct. 14 at Foulweather Bluff: 1 northern harrier, 1 merlin

Oct. 14 near Hansville: 18 American pipits

Lapland Longspur at Foulweather Bluff by Arlen Price.

Juvenile Pacific Golden Plover at Foulweather Bluff by Janine Schutt.



Bird of the Month: Hooded Merganser - Janine Schutt

About two dozen species of ducks spend the winter in Kitsap waters. Among them are all three species of mergansers. The largest, the common merganser, can be found in both freshwater and saltwater. The medium-sized red-breasted merganser is a saltwater dweller. And the small hooded merganser can be found on any body of water at any time of year, but is most commonly found from late fall to early spring. Here are some fascinating facts about the hooded merganser:

- Male has a striking combination of black, white and chestnut markings and sports a magnificent white crest, outlined in black. The female is gray and brown with a cinnamon crest. Both can raise and lower their trademark crests.
- Either a year-round resident or a short-distance migrant across most of the U.S. and southern Canada.
- Breeds in forested wetlands and secluded ponds.
- Unlike other mergansers that mainly eat fish, the hooded merganser has a varied diet that includes small fish, mollusks, crustaceans, amphibians, aquatic insects, and vegetation.
- Dives in shallow water to find food, which it

locates visually with built-in goggles.

- Grabs hold of its prey with a slender, serrated bill while using its feet for propulsion.
- Nests in tree cavities near water, usually between 10-50 high, but may select a site up to 90 feet high.
- Female softens the cavity floor with downy feathers pulled from her own belly.
- Female lays 5 to 13 eggs and incubates them for 26 to 41 days.
- Male does not assist with raising the chicks.
- Sometimes practices "brood parasitism," the laying of eggs in the nests of other hooded mergansers or other duck species. A single nest may contain up to 44 eggs.
- Within a day of hatching, in answer to the mother's call, chicks leap from the nest to the forest floor then follow her to the nearest water which may be a half mile away.
- Female cares for her chicks for about two months, then abandons them shortly before they can fly.

Male left, female right. Photos by Janine Schutt.



Kitsap annual Salmon Tours

Saturday, November 4th from 10 to 2

Kitsap Audubon volunteers shown (right) during last year's annual Kitsap Salmon Tours in Poulsbo's Fish Park. Families come hoping to see salmon returning to spawn. Pictured left to right are North Kitsap High School student Talon Grant, Kitsap Audubon President Kevin Eyer, Kitsap Audubon Newsletter Editor Gene Bullock, and Kitsap Audubon Vice President Lynn Willmott. Photo by Kitsap Audubon/ Lions Club member Karl Oestheller.



Discover Kingston

Kitsap Audubon joined 51 Kitsap County community organizations at the Kingston Village Green Community Center to acquaint local citizens with the volunteer opportunities and resources available. *Discover Kingston* was sponsored by the Kingston Community Advisory Council and Discover Kingston Open House Committee. Pictured (from left) are Kitsap Audubon booth volunteers Gene and Sandy Bullock and Conservation Committee Chair Isabella Carlsen.



Birding backpacks for GPC student tours

Kitsap Audubon has provided two birding backpacks with four pairs of binoculars and birding field guides to Great Peninsula Conservancy (GPC) for its "Land Lab" middle-school student tours of such GPC properties as the Grovers Creek Preserve in North Kitsap. Kitsap Audubon has also provided binoculars and field guides to Kitsap County teachers serving as advisers to student birding/outdoor clubs. GPC Land Lab Program

The Kitsap Audubon Board is thrilled to support GPC's innovative "Land Labs" Program. The program involves providing hands-on environmental education opportunities and leadership training for "future stewards" of our environment, wildlife, forests and shorelines. Groups of 5th, 6th, and 7th grade students participate in such active GPC field projects as stream stewardship, habitat restoration, salmon habitat enhancement, plant ecology and birdwatching tours led by GPC staff members and volunteers in natural settings provided by GPC's marine, forest and conservation preserves.

GPC Land Lab leadership training participants: From left, Beatrice Lincke, Claire Voris, and Sophia Pelletier. Photo by Jaime Webb.

Claire is GPC's Engagement Manager. Beatrice, Sophia and Jaime are AmeriCorps VISTA Fellows.



Turkey Native to America - Gene Bullock

On Thanksgiving, the turkey is the iconic bird of the day. But wild turkeys get a lot of attention any time of the year. They're one of our biggest birds, and a strutting tom is an impressive sight with his fanned peacock tail, distinctive wattle and flamboyant colors.

My most memorable turkey encounter occurred in a place called Turkey Creek Canyon on the rim of the Gila Wilderness in Arizona. I was on a 1980 Sierra Club backpack. A hot, dry hike brought us to a saddle forested with Ponderosa pines. It offered cooling relief from the sun plus sweeping views of the surrounding desert. I gratefully shed my sweaty pack and seated myself on the soft forest duff with my back against a rock – and fell asleep. When I awoke I was surrounded by turkeys. Some were almost within reach. I sat still as a stump while they continued grazing all around me.

Turkeys are native to the Americas. Turkey fossils have been unearthed across the southern U.S. and Mexico dating back five million years. Their numbers dwindled through the early 20th century because of their popularity on the dinner table. But turkeys have been reintroduced in every state except Alaska.

Turkeys were domesticated for food by native peoples before the Spanish conquistadors arrived. They were reported in the Yucatan by Francisco de Cordoba's men in 1517, and by Cortez in 1519.

Europeans originally thought America was part of the West Indies, so the French word for turkey is "coq d'Inde." In 16th Century England, many exotic foods were imported by eastern Mediterranean merchants. They were referred to as "turkey goods," because trade routes crossed through Turkey, and the name came to represent an unfamiliar, far-off place. Any big, edible fowl not familiar to them became "turkey birds." And this transferred to the big edible fowl brought back to Spain by the conquistadors .

In England, turkey became so popular it replaced chicken at many dinner tables. Shakespeare mentioned the turkey in *12th Night*, written around 1601, so it was already familiar to his audiences. The English brought the name to the New World, and it became a fixture in the language.

Ben Franklin once suggested naming the American turkey our national bird. He argued that the American eagle is a scavenger, and less deserving of recognition. But the eagle is a long-established symbol of power and appears in many royal crests. Many considered turkeys stupid, in spite of their uncanny ability to outwit hunters. But the bias gave rise to the use of "turkey" to refer to a person who lacks good sense or judgement.

It's doubtful that our celebrated *First Thanksgiving* dinner bore any resemblance to today's holiday dinner fare; but the turkey has always had a special place in American history and holiday tradition.

Photo by Jay Wiggs.



Friends of Miller Bay Annual meeting

**Featured speaker: Christine Rolfes
North Kitsap County Commissioner**

**Suquamish House of Awakened Culture
Wednesday, November 8th at 7:00 p.m.**

The public is invited to this free event



Kevin Eyer, President of Kitsap Audubon, participates in bird-banding class offered by Puget Sound Bird Observatory.

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Facebook: <https://www.Facebook.com/KitsapAububonSociety/>

Instagram at <http://www.instagram.com/kitsapaudubon/>

Follow us on Twitter at @kitsapaudubon

Twitter handle: @KitsapAudubon

Recorded programs: <https://www.kitsapaudubon.org/video>

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The Kingfisher is printed on recycled paper by Blue Sky Printing and mailed by Olympic Presort, both family-owned local businesses.



Kitsap Audubon Society

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The Kingfisher is the newsletter of the Kitsap Audubon Society, P.O. Box 961, Poulsbo, WA 98370. It is published ten times a year, September to June. Submissions from readers are welcome. We reserve the right to edit for space, grammar or legal reasons. Email text or photographs to genebullock@comcast.net or mail to Gene Bullock, 1754 NE Mesford Rd., Unit 5, Poulsbo WA 98370. Our deadline is the 15th of the preceding month.

To receive your Kingfisher via email and save the expense of printing and mailing, send your request to Info@kitsapaudubon.org

Kitsap Audubon Society - Membership Renewal

Join/Renew online at <http://www.kitsapaudubon.org/membership>

or make check payable to KAS and mail to KAS, PO Box 961, Poulsbo, WA 98370

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Additional donation: \$ _____

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Your contact information is not sold, disclosed or shared with any entity outside KAS.

The mission of the Kitsap Audubon Society is to preserve the natural world through education, environmental study and habitat protection, and to promote awareness and enjoyment of local and regional natural areas.

Visit our website at <https://www.kitsapaudubon.org>

